

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

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P R 301517Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8704

INFO AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L HELSINKI 1175

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, FI

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT AND ELECTION SITUATION

REF: A) HELSINKI 1165 B) HELSINKI 1134 C) HELSINKI 1045;
D) HELSINKI 933

1. FULLER INFORMATION ABOUT MAY 29 MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENT
KEKKONEN AND REPRESENTATIVES OF FOUR PARTIES IN SORSA COALITION
GOVERNMENT INDICATES THAT WHILE ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD BEFORE
MARCH 1976 DUE DATE, THEY WILL NOT COME BEFORE SEPTEMBER 21-22,
AND POSSIBLY LATER. EVEN IF ELECTIONS TAKE PLACE IN SEPTEMBER,
KEKKONEN CONSTITUTIONALLY HAS ENTIRE MONTH OF JUNE TO MAKE
THAT DECISION. EXPECTATIONS ARE THAT HE WILL ANNOUNCE
DATE OF THE ELECTIONS -- BE IT SEPTEMBER OR LATER -- DURING
THE FIRST TWO WEEKS IN JUNE. KEKKONEN IS LIKELY TO HOLD OFF
ON MAKING HIS DECISION UNTIL HE HAS A BETTER IDEA OF
WHEN CSCE SUMMIT MIGHT BE HELD IN HELSINKI.

2. QUESTION OF TIE-IN BETWEEN TIMING OF CSCE SUMMIT AND FALL
OF SORSA GOVERNMENT HAS GONE THROUGH MANY STAGES, AS
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SHOWN IN REFTELS. AFTER MID-1974, MANY SAID LIFE

OF SORSA GOVERNMENT WAS BEING PROLONGED WHILE CSCE PHASE III IN OFFING. THEN KEKKONEN IN HIS LETTER IN EARLY APRIL SAID THAT FUTURE OF GOVERNMENT DID NOT DEPEND ON CSCE AND ON MAY 15 SAID AGAIN THAT "DEVELOPMENTS IN FINLAND'S INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION CAN IN NO WAY BECOME AN OBSTACLE TO CSCE STATE III AT DESIRED TIME." YESTERDAY EKKKONEN IS QUOTED TO HAVE SAID THAT TIMING OF CSCE SUMMIT WOULD PLAY A ROLE IN DETERMINING ELECTION DATE. MOST NEWSPAPERS ARE NOT MAKING BIG THING OF LASTEST SWITCH, AND CONSIDER THAT IT IS PERFECTLY REASONABLE FOR KEKKONEN NOT TO WANT ELECTIONS AND CSCE SUMMIT TO FALL ON SAME DAYS.

3. IN REGARD TO INCLUSION OF MUNICIPAL LAND PURCHASE LAW IN "URGENT PENDING LEGISLATION TO BE COMPLETED" LIST (REF.A) KEKKONEN IS REPORTED TO HAVE TOLD CENTER PARTY CHAIRMAN VIOLAINEN THAT IT HAD BEEN LEFT OFF ORIGINAL LIST DUE TO HUMAN ERROR AND THAT HE HAD ALWAYS INTENDED FOR IT TO BE PART OF LIST. BE THIS AS IT MAY, KEKKONEN'S ACTION IS CONSIDERED TO FAVOR SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AT EXPENSE OF CENTER PARTY. KEKKONEN ALSO ADDED TO "URGENT" LIST ANOTHER LAW, THAT OF SPECIAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO OLD CITIES, FOR THE PURPOSE OF HELPING THEM DEFRAID THEIR UNUSUALLY HIGH EXPENDITURES. ALL THIS MAKES IT VERY QUESTIONABLE WHETHER PARLIAMENT CAN COMPLETE ITS WORK BY JUNE 10 AS CENTER PARTY IS INSISTING IT MUST. IT IS QUIRE POSSIBLE THAT PARLIAMENT WILL HAVE TO CONTINUE ITS SESSION UNTIL JUNE 20 HOLIDAY, OR EVEN LATER.

4. CENTER PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP HAS GRUDGINGLY AGREED TO CENTER PARTY MINISTERS REMAINING IN GOVERNMENT, BUT IS INSISTING THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOW BE LOOKED UPON AS CARETAKER GOVERNMENT RATHER THAN NORMAL POLITICAL PARLIAMENT-BASED GOVERNMENT. SOCIAL DEMOCRATS TAKE DIFFERING VIEW, SAYING GOVERNMENT WILL ONLY BECOME CARETAKER WHEN KEKKONEN ANNOUNCES ELECTION DATE AND WILL THEN STAY ON IN THAT CAPACITY UNTIL KEKKONEN DISSOLVES PARLIAMENT. BASIC DIFFERENCE IS ONLY THAT CARETAKER GOVERNMENT DOES NOT INITIATE NEW PROGRAMS OR LEGISLATION.

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MAIN REASON FOR CENTER PARTY ATTITUDE IS CONSIDERED TO BE ATTEMPT TO THWART PASSAGE OF MUNICIPAL LAND PURCHASE LAW. KEKKONEN IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THAT HE DOES NOT CARE WHAT KIND OF GOVERNMENT THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS ITSELF TO BE , AS LONG AS IT DOES ITS JOB AND PARLIAMENT PASSES THE LEGISLATION HE WANTS PASSED. IT IS STILL EXPECTED THAT AN "EXPERT" GOVERNMENT WILL BE NAMED WHEN PARLIAMENT IS DISSOLVED.

5. PRIME MINISTER SORSA YESTERDAY CONFIRMED RUMORS THAT KEKKONEN RECENTLY HAD SUGGESTED FOREIGN MINISTER KARJALAINEN MOVE OVER TO FINANCE MINISTRY, SINCE KARJALAINEN AND HIS SUPPORTERS HAD BEEN VOCAL CRITICS OF GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC POLICY. SUGGESTION, HOWEVER, WAS NOT ACCEPTED BY CENTER PARTY, THIS IS YET ANOTHER INDICATION OF THE STRAINED RELATIONS AT THIS TIME BETWEEN KEKKONEN AND KARJALAINEN.

6 GENERALLY ACCEPPED SCENARIO NOW IS THAT: 1) KEKKONEN WILL DECIDE PROBABLY DURING FIRST TWO WEEKS OF JUNE WHEN ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD, AND THIS LIKELY TO BE SEPTEMBER 21-22. SORSA GOVERNMENT WILL THEN ASK TO BE RELIEVED OF ITS DUTIES. KEKKONEN WILL THEN ASK SORSA GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE IN CARETAKER CAPACITY.

2) PARLIAMENT WILL SPEED UP CONSIDERATION OF "MUST" PENDING LEGISLATION. 3) WHEN PARLIAMENT HAS COMPLETED ITS WORK KEKKONEN WILL ANNOUNCE ITS DISSOLUTION. AT THAT TIME HE WILL NAME EXPERT GOVERNMENT WHICH WILL PREPARE NEXT YEARS' BUDGET AND CONTINUE GOVERNING UNTIL NEW POLITICAL GOVERNMENT FORMED AFTER ELECTIONS.

7 COMMENT: THESE DEVELOPMENTS CLEARLY SHOW WHO IS THE BOSS, NAMELY KEKKONEN. THROUGH HIS ACTIONS KEKKONEN HAS ALSO SIDED WITH AND FAVORED SOCIAL DEMOCRATS. SORSA WILL GO TO SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY CONGRESS JUNE 5 STILL PRIME MINISTER. KEKKONEN HAS DEALT HARSHLY WITH CENTER PARTY, PARTICULARLY SO WITH ITS KARJALAINEN-VAYRYNEN FACTION. HE HAS NOT ONLY REJECTED AUGUST AS THE ELECTION MONTH, WHICH THEY WANTED, BUT ALSO HOPES TO DEPRIVE THEM OF REGIONAL DEVEELOPMENT POLICY AS AN CONFIDENTIAL

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ELECTION ISSUE. KEKKONEN RUBBED MORE SALT INTO CENTER PARTY WOUNDS WHEN HE REFUSED TO LET THEIR MINISTERS RESIGN. ALL IN ALL KEKKONEN HAS AGAIN POSTPONED CRISIS ON FINNISH DOMESTIC POLCITCAL SCENE SOMEWHAT BY HIS LATEST ACTIONS AND BY MAKING IT CLEAR THAT THERE WILL BE EARLY ELECTIONS AND THAT EARLIEST DATE FOR THEM WILL BE SEPTEMBER. AUSTAD

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